

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Responsible Agencies: U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA); U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS).

Title of Proposed Action: BPA/Lower Valley Transmission Project.

States Involved: Idaho and Wyoming.

Abstract: Bonneville Power Administration and Lower Valley Power and Light, Inc. propose to solve a voltage stability problem in the Jackson and Afton, Wyoming areas. Lower Valley buys electricity from BPA and then supplies it to the residences and businesses of the Jackson and Afton, Wyoming areas. Since the late 1980s, LVPL's electrical load has been growing by an average of 4-5 megawatts (MW) per year, and LVPL expects continued growth at about this rate. During winter, an outage of one of the BPA or LVPL transmission lines that serve these areas could cause voltage on the transmission system to dip below acceptable levels in the Jackson area and to a lesser extent in the Afton area. Low voltage levels can cause brownouts, or under certain conditions, a blackout. BPA is considering five alternatives. For the Agency Proposed Action, BPA and Lower Valley would construct a new 115-kV line from BPA's Swan Valley Substation near Swan Valley in Bonneville County, Idaho about 58 km (36 miles) east to BPA's Teton Substation near Jackson in Teton County, Wyoming. The new line would be next to an existing 115-kV line. Most of the line would be supported by a mix of single-circuit wood pole H-frame structures and lattice steel structures. At Teton Pass, and coming off Phillips Ridge into Teton Substation, double-circuit structures would be used. The Single-Circuit Line Alternative has all the components of the Agency Proposed Action except that the entire line would be supported by single-circuit structures. The Short Line Alternative has all the components of the Single-Circuit Line Alternative except it would only be half as long, from Targhee Tap near Victor in Teton County, Idaho 29 km (18 miles) east to Teton Substation. BPA would also construct a new switching station near the existing right-of-way, north of Targhee Tap. Targhee Tap would then be removed. For the Static Var Compensation Alternative, BPA would install a Static Var Compensator (SVC) at Teton or Jackson Substation. An SVC is a group of electrical equipment placed at a substation to help control voltage on a transmission system. The No Action Alternative assumes that no new transmission line is built, and no other equipment is added to the transmission system.

The USFS (Targhee and Bridger-Teton National Forests) must select an alternative based on their needs and objectives, decide if the project complies with currently approved forest plans, decide if special use permits or easements are needed for construction, operation, and maintenance of project facilities, and decide if they would issue special use permits and letters of consent to grant easements for the project.

Public comment is being accepted through August 5, 1997.

To request additional copies of the EIS please contact BPA's document request line: 1-800-622-4520 or write to:

Public Involvement Office

Bonneville Power Administration

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The EIS is also available at the BPA WEB site: www.bpa.gov. Look for and click on *publications*.

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